RMTD 400: Introduction to Research Methodology  
Summer 2017

Instructor: David Shriberg, dshribe@luc.edu, (312) 915-7087, Lewis Towers 1034  
Classroom Location: online  
Office Hours: by appointment

Diversity/Social Justice Statement: One of the main reasons why I came to Loyola is this university’s social justice mission. At first glance, it is possible that one might not see the connection between research and social justice. Indeed, historically (as we will discuss when we focus on research ethics) research has not always been conducted in ways that one would associate with social justice. However, research can be a powerful tool for social change. Indeed, research itself can be conceived as a radical act, a statement that the current state of knowledge and understanding is insufficient. Perhaps the way a topic is often understood is flawed and there is a need for research to investigate questions that go against the status quo. Or maybe there is an emerging body of research that is incomplete. For example, in preK-12 education in the United States it is well established that students of color, particularly males, are more likely to be suspended for subjective acts--e.g., being “disrespectful” or making a teacher “feel uncomfortable”--than their white counterparts. What drives this? Are there any examples of schools where this does not occur? If so, what is different about these schools? The social justice issue--inequitable school discipline practices--is quite well established, but there is a need for research efforts that speak to the mechanisms behind this and potential research-supported micro and macro remedies.

There are numerous other examples both of social injustices and social justice opportunities—I believe that social justice is not only about working against injustice, but also finding opportunities for positive action--in any field of study. As such, as part of this course we will be asking you to identify social justice topics that matter both to you personally and to your field. We will then work with you to think through what a strong research project focused on this topic might look like.

Course Structure: With the exclusion of the first week (since this class begins on a Wednesday (July 5), your first online work will be due on Friday, July 7), each week you will have work due on Monday and Thursday. Sometimes this work will be online work, other times this work will be one the major class assignments that are described in a later section of this syllabus, sometimes both. You will receive regular email postings from me describing what is due on each day. Most typically, by Monday of each week you will receive an email describing what is due on Thursday of that week and then on Thursday you will receive an email describing what is due the following Monday. Very often I will cross-post to this information within Sakai, but please get in the habit of checking your Loyola email 1-2 times a day to make sure that you are up to date with course assignments and deadlines.
Course Description: This course will introduce the concept of inquiry and various research methods used in education, psychology, and other social sciences. Furthermore, the course will introduce the three main methods of inquiry: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods. Students will be able to analyze research critically and create a research proposal.

As a result of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the similarities and differences between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research traditions, including paradigms, designs, methods, sampling techniques, and so on.
2. Analyze and evaluate the research questions, design, findings, and validity of existing research.
3. Understand pertinent legal and ethical issues in educational research.
4. Conduct a review of relevant literature that synthesizes the knowledge from several research studies around the central idea or research question.
5. Create a mini-proposal centered around a topic of personal interest and professional relevance


Within this framework are four standards. These are:
- CFS1: Candidates critically evaluate current bodies of knowledge in their field.
- CFS2: Candidates apply culturally responsive practices that engage diverse communities.
- CFS3: Candidates demonstrate knowledge of ethics and social justice.
- CFS4: Candidates engage with local and/or global communities in ethical and socially just practices.

While it is possible that all four standards will be touched on in this course, of particular emphasis will be the first and third standards. Through being a critical consumer of research, including seeking out and valuing research that cuts against the social grain, one emerges in a stronger position to understand the forces that sustain injustice and strategies for promoting justice. These strategies can then be actualized via ethical research that speaks to core social justice tenets.

IDEA Course Objectives: Loyola utilizes a faculty evaluation system labeled “IDEA”. As part of this system, faculty are asked to identify which of a list of thirteen potential course objectives
are most salient to each course. The full listing of IDEA objectives are provided below. Objectives that are bolded are ones that I feel are particularly important to this course.

1. Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)
2. Developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures
3. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
4. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course
5. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team
6. Developing creative capacities (inventing; designing; writing; performing in art, music drama, etc.)
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)
8. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing
9. Learning how to find, evaluate and use resources to explore a topic in depth
10. Developing ethical reasoning and/or ethical decision making
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
12. Learning to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good
13. Learning appropriate methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting numerical information

Dispositions: All students in the School of Education are assessed on one or more dispositional areas of growth across our programs: Professionalism, Inquiry, and Social Justice. For Research Methodology courses, including this one, the dispositions have been defined based on professional standards (e.g., American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles). Please review a complete list of the dispositions and corresponding rubric in LiveText. Your status on these dispositions are a piece of evidence considered in your overall progress in your program of study, and they also overlap with expectations for participation in the course.

Required Readings:
Additional required and suggested readings will be posted on the Sakai site.

Recommended Book:
This is not a required text and if this is the only class and/or required element of your program of study where you are likely to write a research paper using APA format, you certainly do not need to purchase this book as the content in Chapter 21 of our main textbook should suffice in terms of what you need for this course. However, if you plan to conduct additional research or have other courses where APA format is required, this book is an excellent resource.

**Loyola Library Resources:**

1) Library Tutorials (e.g., searching for books, articles, etc.):
http://libguides.luc.edu/c.php?g=49660&p=2505294

2) RefWorks is an online tool to help you organize and store your library searches. Here is the link to register for an account (free to Loyola students). You can also generate reference pages in APA style.

http://www.refworks.com/refworks2/?r=authentication::init&groupcode=RWLoyolaUC

3) SOE Librarian: Tracy Ruppman, the librarian for the School of Education, is an invaluable resource. Over the years she has supported countless students at all phases of their research endeavors. Tracy can be reached at truppman@luc.edu, or via phone at (312) 915-6949.

**Online Etiquette:** Regardless of your experience level with online and blended courses, knowledge of online course etiquette is extremely important. The paragraphs below are from the University of Wisconsin Colleges Online website on Online Etiquette. Students are expected to adhere to these guidelines and recommendations.

**Disembodied Discussions**

A key distinguishing feature of online courses is that communication occurs solely via the written word (*Dave Shriberg comment: in this case of this class, it is more accurate to say that much but not all of the class will take place via the written word*). Because of this, the body language, voice tone, and instantaneous listener feedback of the traditional classroom are all absent. These facts need to be taken into account both when contributing messages to a discussion and when reading them. Keep in mind the following points:

**Tone Down Your Language**

Given the absence of face-to-face clues, written text can easily be misinterpreted. Avoid the use of strong or offensive language and the excessive use of exclamation points. If you feel particularly strongly about a point, it may be best to write it first as a draft and then to review it, before posting our statement.
In general, avoid humor and sarcasm (Dave Shriberg comment: I would hate to have a humorless class, sounds dreadful and dull. We are all professionals here. Therefore, I would amend the previous sentence to say to just be very careful with humor and sarcasm, remembering that we are all in professional programs. If you are at all unsure about how your humor and/or sarcasm might come across, then don’t write it). These frequently depend either on facial or tone of voice cues absent in text communication or on familiarity with the reader.

If someone states something you find offensive, mention it directly to the instructor. Remember the person may be new to online learning. What you find offensive may be an unintended and can be corrected by the instructor.

Test For Clarity

Messages may often appear perfectly clear to you as the writer but turn out to be confusing by another reader. One way to test for clarity is to read your message aloud to see if it flows smoothly.

Be concise when possible when contributing to a discussion. If you have several points you want to make, it may be a good idea to post them individually in more focused messages rather than a single, all-encompassing message.

Think carefully about the content of your message before contributing to the discussion. Once sent to the group, there is no taking it back. Although grammar and spelling may not be graded, they do reflect on you, and your audience might not be able to decode misspelled words or poorly constructed sentences. Acronyms and Emoticons are popular to use. Remember that online courses require professional writing. Be discerning with your use of “texting” writing.

Citations and Other Etiquette Sources

Many of the points made here were taken from The Core Rules of Netiquette excerpted from the book Netiquette, by Virginia Shea. Further information was taken from Arlene H. Rinaldi’s The Net: User Guidelines and Netiquette.

Course Requirements and Evaluation Procedures:

1. Class Participation (15%)

This is an asynchronous online course. That means that there is no time when every student is required to be online at the same time. As with any other course, class participation is essential in an online class. Some elements of online class participation are very similar to what typically is valued in a face-to-face course, and some elements are different. Beginning with differences, in this course it is absolutely essential that you check your Loyola email regularly as I will be using this email address as the primary mechanism to communicate with you. Saying that you did not check your email on time or that an email did not forward to you from your Loyola email to somewhere else will not be considered a valid excuse for a graduate student
taking an online course. Check your Loyola email at least daily, if not more, to be able to keep up with this class.

The second area of class participation that is important for any class but is particularly important for an asynchronous online class is reading everything—including this syllabus!—closely and fully. I will be posting audio files as part of this course, but a LOT of the communication is through writing. I will do my best to highlight pertinent details within my writing, but ultimately it is up to you to read everything you receive—as well as everything posted to the Sakai site—fully.

Elements that are similar to an in-person class are the ideas of consistent engagement and respectful behavior to others. The elements of respectful behavior are outlined in the previous section on online etiquette. On my end, I pledge to do my utmost to treat everyone with respect and dignity, valuing and encouraging differences of opinion. I also pledge to do my utmost to facilitate a classroom climate that is respectful, relaxed, and engaging. While this can be a challenge to accomplish in an online class, I have taught many online classes before and know this to be possible if this overall vision and commitment is shared and owned by both myself and all of you. Online classes can be very engaging or, frankly, they can be quite dull if everyone does not engage fully. I pledge to do my utmost to make this class engaging, but this can only occur in partnership with all of you.

In terms of my expectations of you related to consistent engagement, this means that you must complete all online work on time. Particularly given that this is a six week class, time moves quickly and if you do not keep up you will join dialogues too late to have an impact. Short of an emergency—and of course please let me know privately if something occurs that precludes you from keeping up—you need to be on top of things from the jump to be consistently engaged in this course. One final point—“engagement” does not mean frequency. That is, while if you are required to make a post you will be expected to do so, it is not necessarily the case that someone who posts five times a week is more “engaged” with the class than someone who posts twice. Quality is highly valued. I would much prefer one thoughtful comment that advances conversation than three banal posts. As of this writing, there are fifteen students in this class. If you imagine a group of fifteen people—sixteen if you count me—in dialogue, if everyone makes three banal comments to every topic, the conversation would go flat pretty quickly and people are likely to check out. But, if people make their comments count and people give each other the respect and space to make their presence felt, a much more rich and vibrant learning situation can occur than if any pair of us were talking without the presence of the rest of the class.

2. Ethics Essay (15%)

For this assignment, you are first to read the seminal Belmont Report, which can be accessed by following this link: https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/index.html

Please also read the article contained in the “Ethics Assignment” folder within the “Resources” tab (file is labeled “article for ethics assignment”). In a 2-3 page essay, please
address the following question: How would you address the ethics of this study given the Belmont Report principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice? The paper will be graded based on both the extent that your paper represents an understanding of the principles of the Belmont report (respect for persons, beneficence, and justice) and on overall writing quality.

This assignment is due by 11:59pm on July 17. Please turn in this assignment in the “Ethics Essay” section within the “Assignments” tab.

3. Annotated Bibliography (15%)

Students will construct an annotated bibliography of 8 empirical, scholarly resources relevant to the focus of mini-proposal (indeed, it is the hope that these references will form the foundation of your literature review for this mini-proposal). The resources should be peer-reviewed articles or book chapters (I will cover what peer-reviewed means as part of this class). This assignment is due by 11:59pm on July 24. Please submit this document in the “Assignments” folder in the Sakai site for this course.

The required elements of the annotated bibliography are as follows:

i. Bibliography must include at least 8 empirical resources
ii. Each annotation should be approximately 150 words (typical range is 100-200 words)
iii. Each annotation should include the following information:
   1. Main focus or purpose of the work
   2. Special features of the work that were unique or helpful
   3. Conclusions or observations reached by the author
   4. Usefulness or relevance to your research topic
   5. Your main takeaways from this work.

The primary criteria used to evaluate your annotated bibliography are appropriateness of source (e.g., peer-reviewed, published within past ten years (exceptions will be made for seminal work that is cited frequently today. If you have a more dated reference, make clear why you selected this source), relevance of resource (to your primary topic), quality of annotation (e.g., did you provide the five elements listed above, was the writing grammatically strong and free of typos), and attention to APA citation style.

Within the “Resources” section of this class’s Sakai site, I have included two sample A+ Annotated Bibliographies from when I have used this assignment before. I thank these students for giving me permission to do this.

4. Mini Research Proposal (40%)

During the first week of class, you will be asked to share your previous experience with research. It is my assumption that collectively you have a wide range of experience, with some of you having no experience whereas others may be actively working on a masters’ or doctoral
thesis. Wherever you are starting from, as part of this course you will leave with increased experience and knowledge germane to writing a research proposal.

A central goal of this course is to for all students to leave with strong skills in developing a research proposal. Another central goal is highlighting the connection of research with social justice. Accordingly, you are to pick a topic that is: 1) a strong interest of yours personally, 2) an area in need of further research in your professional discipline, and 3) a topic that speaks to social justice. You will then work towards completion of a mini-research proposal for a project aimed at addressing this topic. While this may or may not be a project that you actually implement, the idea is for this to be a project that you would be highly interested and motivated to implement if you had the opportunity to do so.

While the full proposal is due by 11:59pm on Thursday, August 11, this proposal will be submitted in stages across the semester, to the point where by August 11 you will have already submitted every other component of this proposal—and received my feedback—except the Methods section. Thus, the final product is the composite of work that—again minus the Methods section—you will have already submitted earlier in the summer term. Again with my thanks, I have posted two sample A+ mini-proposals. Please keep in mind, however, that these samples came from when I taught this course over a fifteen week semester. Given the lengthier time period, my expectations for the Literature Review were higher. As such, you will see Literature Reviews longer than five pages. For this class, my expectation for the overall quality of your writing in your Literature Review is identical to from when I have had this assignment in a 15 week session. However, in recognition of the compressed time period of a summer term, I have shortened the expected length of the Literature Review to no more than five double-spaced pages. Otherwise, these student samples are great models for this mini-proposal.

Below are the components and due dates for each portion of this mini research proposal (at each stage, please submit your work via the “Assignments” area in Sakai):

**Research Problem Statement/Study Purpose and Research Questions (due 11:59pm on July 20)**

These proposal elements form the initial foundation for your mini-proposal. The problem statement and study purpose provide the broad rationale for your study and the research questions describe what you intend to investigate. Before this assignment is due we will be reading Chapter 4 from your main textbook. Pages 90-98 of this chapter describe these elements in nice and clear detail and it is this structure that you should utilize for this portion of your mini-proposal.

**Literature Review (due 11:59pm on July 31)**

As part of this course, we will be covering how to write literature reviews more broadly. For this specific assignment, your literature review should be no more than five double-spaced pages (not including references and not including your research problem statement/study purpose and research questions, which should be presented ahead of your Literature Review). You will
have already identified 8 pertinent references for your annotated bibliography, so you should be most of the way there with this review. I recommend that you organize your literature review around your research questions, identifying key variables within each question and describing research that speaks to these variables. If a research article or book chapter does not speak directly to one or more of your research questions and critical variables, this article or book chapter is not particularly helpful to your literature review. Even if this is a topic that you know that I have some background with, write your literature review as if the reader has no previous knowledge of your topics. By the end of your literature review, the reader should have a clear sense of what your study will cover and why this study is needed. Think of yourself as a lawyer making a research-based case for why your study is needed.

**Methods Section (due 11:59pm on August 10)**

Your study purpose/problem statement provides the basic rationale for your study. The research questions provide a listing of what will be measured. Your Literature Review makes a research-based case for the need for your study. Your Methods section describes HOW your study will be conducted vis-à-vis your research questions. Who will your participants be? What instruments will you use to collect your data? How will your data be analyzed once collected? Specifically, your Methods section should have four subsections.

1) **Setting:** describes where your study will take place, as well as anything that binds your participants (e.g., do they all attend the same university? Do they all attend the same preK-12 school?). Provide any contextual information (e.g., structures for supporting college students, demographics of school, settings' history around your topic) that explains why this setting was selected.

2) **Participants:** here describe who your participants are, as well as any demographic data you will be collecting. For example, you might say, "The anticipated participants are 10-15 college students who..."

3) **Instrument(s):** Here describe and present your research tools, including any subareas. For example, if you plan to administer a fifteen item survey covering three broad topics (each topic having five survey questions), you would first describe a description of the survey and the three broad topic areas followed by a copy of the actual survey.

4) **Procedure**- this has three subsections
   a. **Recruitment:** describe procedures for recruiting your participants, including safeguards for protecting the rights of participants
   b. **Data Collection:** take the reader through exactly how the data will be collected, step by step.
   c. **Data Analysis:** take the reader through every step of how your data will be analyzed once collected. Frame around your research questions such that the reader understands exactly how each of your research questions will be evaluated.
Here are the mini-proposal elements and due dates in Table form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Problem Statement/Purpose of Study, and Research Questions</td>
<td>July 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>(no more than three; 1-2 recommended)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review (up to five double-spaced pages)</td>
<td>July 31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>August 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Proposal</td>
<td>August 10</td>
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**Research Proposal Grading:** Each submission will be given a letter grade at each step. The primary grading criteria are overall clarity and quality of writing. Since each step builds upon the previous step, you always have the opportunity (and indeed are encouraged) to revise if graded poorly at any one point. For example, suppose you receive a grade of “B” for your research problem statement/purpose of study. At the time you submit your Literature Review, you can (and likely should) also submit a revised research problem statement/purpose of study. If you then receive a higher grade on your research problem statement/purpose of study, this is the grade that will carry forward. Students who receive a grade of A at every stage will receive an A for the assignment. For those who have varying grades, your grade on the Methods and Literature Review will each be weighted 40% and your grade on your Research Project Statement/Purpose of Study and Research Questions will each be weighted 10%. A final grade for this assignment will be calculated from these weights.

5. **Panopto Presentation (15%)**

The purpose of this assignment, which is due at 11:59pm on August 10, is to give you an opportunity to explain your research to an audience. The presentation should last no longer than 10 minutes. The presentation should include the following components:

a. Your starting point/how did you arrive at this topic?
b. Statement of the Problem
c. Research Questions
d. Brief overview of the literature
e. Intended Outcomes—who may benefit from your study and why?

This presentation will be submitted online as a Panopto presentation. In a Panopto presentation, what is recorded is your voice and whatever is on the computer screen as you are making the recording. So, for example, if you have your thoughts organized as a Prezi or PowerPoint, you would hit record, open the Prezi or PowerPoint on your computer in full screen mode, and record your presentation. I will be able to see whatever is on your computer screen as you are speaking. You will first need to download the Panopto software, which you can do by
clicking on the “Panopto” tab in the class’s Sakai site and following the directions from there. If you have not used Panopto before, I strongly advise you to do a brief test recording first to make sure that the sound and visuals are recorded properly. You can then record over or delete this initial test recording and upload the final version to Sakai.

This presentation will be graded primarily on the clarity and quality of your presentation. While the content is important, keep in mind that I will be reading about your project in more depth in your written product. Thus, the point of this presentation is not to restate every point of your mini-proposal, but rather to serve as a run-through of the key points, as would occur in a dissertation proposal meeting, where typically the first step is a student overview of the project.

**Grades:** All assignments will be graded on an A+-F scale, with a grade of A+ equaling 4.3, a grade of A equaling 4.0, a grade of A- equaling 3.7 and so forth. Final grades will be based on a weighted average of assignment scores (see course assignments for specific weights) with the final grade based on the following scale:

- A= 3.85 or greater
- A-=3.5-3.84
- B+=3.15-3.49
- B= 2.85-3.14
- B-=2.5-2.84
- Etc.

**Semester Outline**

*Readings, topics, and assignments subject to be modified at the instructor’s discretion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Topic Area</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 5</td>
<td>Introductions and Previewing Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 7</td>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong> Social Justice: Conceptual Frameworks</td>
<td>Adams et. al (2013)- Chapter 1 (posted in Sakai)</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong> Introduction to Educational Research; Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Research</td>
<td>J&amp;C- Chapters 1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 13</td>
<td><strong>Planning:</strong> Writing a Research</td>
<td>1) J&amp;C- Chapters 5-6</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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<td>July 17</td>
<td>Proposal; Research Ethics</td>
<td></td>
<td>2) Belmont Report (follow hyperlink on bottom of page six)</td>
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<td>3) Ethics article (posted in Sakai)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July 17</td>
<td>Research Ethics Essay due</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>Planning: Research Writing/ How to Review the Literature and Develop</td>
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<td>1) J&amp;C- Chapter 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
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<td>2) Rocco &amp; Hatcher (2011)- Chapters 7, 11 (posted in Sakai)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>Research Problem Statement/Study Purpose and Research Questions Due</td>
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<td>July 24</td>
<td>Foundations: Standardized Measurement and Assessment; How to</td>
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<td>J&amp;C- Chapters 7-8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Construct a Questionnaire</td>
<td>July 24</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography Due</td>
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<td>July 27</td>
<td>Foundations: Methods of Data Collection, Sampling Procedures;</td>
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<td>J&amp;C- Chapters 9-11</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Validity of Research Results</td>
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<td>July 31</td>
<td>Research Method Selection: Qualitative</td>
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<td>J&amp;C: Chapters 15-16</td>
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<td>July 31</td>
<td>Literature Review Due</td>
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<td>August 3</td>
<td>Research Method Selection: Quantitative and Mixed Methods</td>
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<td>J&amp;C: Chapters 12-14, 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mini Research Proposal Due</td>
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<td>Panopto Presentation Due</td>
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IDEA Course Evaluation Link for Students
Each course you take in the School of Education is evaluated through the IDEA Campus Labs system. We ask that when you receive an email alerting you that the evaluation is available that you promptly complete it. To learn more about IDEA or to access the website directly to complete your course evaluation go to: http://luc.edu/idea/ and click on STUDENT IDEA LOGIN on the left hand side of the page.

Dispositions
All students are assessed on one or more dispositional areas of growth across our programs: Professionalism, Inquiry, and Social Justice. The instructor in your course will identify the dispositions assessed in this course and you can find the rubrics related to these dispositions in LiveText. For those students in non-degree programs, the rubric for dispositions may be available through Sakai, TaskStream or another platform. Disposition data is reviewed by program faculty on a regular basis. This allows faculty to work with students to develop throughout their program and address any issues as they arise.

LiveText
All students, except those who are non-degree, must have access to LiveText to complete the benchmark assessments aligned to the Conceptual Framework Standards and all other accreditation, school-wide and/or program-wide related assessments. You can access more information on LiveText here: LiveText.

Syllabus Addendum Link

- www.luc.edu/education/syllabus-addendum/

This link directs students to statements on essential policies regarding academic honesty, accessibility, ethics line reporting and electronic communication policies and guidelines. We ask that you read each policy carefully.

This link will also bring you to the full text of our conceptual framework that guides the work of the School of Education – Social Action through Education.